

Control of Nuclear Energy

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In the last generation or two, there have been certain explorations of the remotest frontiers of human knowledge which are leading us to many strange discoveries and strange consequences. Max Planck's

Quantum Theory and, later on, Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity changed the whole conception of the universe. Soon came the atom bomb with its power to kill. The human mind and human efforts are unleashing tremendous powers without quite knowing how to control them. They cannot be controlled by a mere desire or demand for banning them. Nobody can really control the human mind from going on unleashing new forces. One of the political problems of the day is how to approach this problem of control which is of vital consequence. Such an approach presupposes some measure of lessening of tension in the world, some measure of mutual confidence on the part of the great nations, some agreement to allow each country to live its own life. The only alternative is conflict, and if the idea of conflict is in the minds of nations, then the atom bomb will undoubtedly remain.

Let us consider the possible issues. It is perfectly clear that atomic energy can be used for peaceful purposes, to the immense advantage of humanity. It may take some years before it can be used more or less economically. I should like the House to remember that the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes is far more important for a country like India whose power resources are limited, than for a country like France, an industrially advanced country. Take the United States of America, which already has vast power resources of other kinds. To have an additional source of power like atomic energy does not mean very much for them. No doubt they can use it, but it is not so indispensable for them as for a power-starved or power-hungry country like India or like most of the other countries in Asia and Africa. I say that because it may be to the advantage of countries which have adequate power resources to restrain and restrict the use of atomic energy because they do not need that power. It would be to the disadvantage of a country like India if that is restricted or

stopped. We should remember this very important aspect of the so-called international control. Who is to control atomic energy internationally? Which are the nations that are going to control it? One may say, the United Nations. Obviously, there is no other organization approaching the United Nations in its international jurisdiction. And yet, the House knows, the United Nations as it is does not include in its scope even the big nations of the world. Some of the biggest are kept out. The United Nations can control only itself. It cannot control any nation which is not in it, which it refuses to admit and with which it would not have anything to do. The result will be that though it may control a great part of the world, still there is a part of the world which is not controlled by it. That part, over which there is no control, may make all the mischief. Therefore, the question of international control becomes difficult. Reference has been made to international control in President Eisenhower's speech.

We all agree with the proposition that there should be proper international control and proper use made of the stock of fissile materials, so that all countries can use them for research work or for proper purposes. But how is this to be done? That is where the difficulty comes in. President Eisenhower refers to some agency of the United Nations. That appears reasonable, but let us see what actual proposals have been made in regard to atomic energy control by various countries. At the beginning of the year, the United States said: "An international control agency shall be set up by the United Nations. It shall thereafter be an independent body outside the control of the Security Council and of the United Nations." The United Nations is merely supposed to set up the agency and wash its hands of it. It becomes an independent organization. This organization will, of course, have an

unlimited right of inspection. Agreed. "It shall have the right to maintain its own guards on the territory of any foreign State, licensed to engage in any of the processes of the production of or research in atomic energy." Thus the atomic energy body becomes a super-State, maintaining its own guards or armies or whatever you like to call them. Then again, "it shall own and control"—mark these words—"the raw materials mined, the plants in which the ore is processed, and all plants which deal with production of atomic energy wherever they may be situated in any country of the world." This is a very far-reaching provision. It means that all our raw materials and our mines would be owned and controlled by that independent body, which is even independent of the United Nations after it is created. It means tremendous power being concentrated in the hands of a select body. "It shall decide if, when and where and to what extent the various processes may be carried out and in which parts of the world atomic energy plants may be established"—and there are limitations also—"and it shall have authority to issue or withhold licences from countries, institutions or enterprises engaged in any activities relating to the production of atomic energy."

I read to you some of the proposals. This vast power is proposed to be given to a body which is independent even of the United Nations which sponsors it or starts it. An important consideration is who will be in it. Either you make the body as big as the United Nations with all the countries represented, or it will be some relatively small body, inevitably with the great powers sitting in it and lording it over. I say with all respect to them that they will have a grip over all the atomic energy areas and raw materials in every country. Now, for a country like India, is it a desirable prospect?

When hon. Members talk so much of international control, let us understand, without using vague phrases and language, what it means. There should be international control and inspection, but it is not such an easy matter as it seems. Certainly, we would be entitled to object to any kind of control which is not exercised to our advantage. We are prepared in this, as in any other matter, even to limit, in common with other countries, our independence of action for the common good of the world. We are prepared to do that, provided we are assured that it is for the common good of the world and not exercised in a partial way, and not dominated over by certain countries, however good their motives.

In President Eisenhower's speech these details are not gone into, but he says that what he calls "normal uranium" should be controlled. I could have understood control of fissile materials. But President Eisenhower refers to "normal uranium". By "normal uranium" he presumably means uranium ores. Again we get back to the raw materials. I submit it would not be right to agree to any plan which hands over even our raw materials and mines to any external authority. I would again beg the House to remember the major fact that atomic energy for peaceful purposes is far more important to the underdeveloped countries of the world than to the developed ones. And if the developed countries have all the powers they may well stop the use of atomic energy everywhere, including in their own countries, because they do not need it so much, and in consequence we might suffer.

We welcome the approach of President Eisenhower in this matter. Since he delivered his speech this question has been discussed by representatives of other great powers chiefly concerned, and if they find out any suitable method for creating this international pool, we shall be very happy, and subject to what I have said, we shall give what we can to it.